

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



College National, Youth State Championship Wins Bring \$2.6 Million in Sports Tourism Impact This Week *Rockford Region to Host 2020 NJCAA DIII Women's Basketball Championship, IKWF State Finals & Illinois Middle School State Basketball Championships*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 11, 2020

Rockford, IL – It's March—and that means sports tourism madness is in full swing in the Rockford region! Alongside many national and local partners, the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is thrilled to welcome thousands of athletes, families and fans for the 2020 National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division III Women's Basketball Championship, the 2020 Illinois Kids Wrestling Federation (IKWF) State Finals, and the 2020 Illinois State Middle School Basketball Championships.

Collectively, the three premier events will attract more than 10,000 visitors, yield \$2,647,031 in tourism economic impact, generate \$121,304 of tax revenue from visitors, support 1,761 local tourism employees, and produce approximately 5,677 hotel overnights in and around Winnebago County.

"This week is the perfect representation of tourism success, and it shines a spotlight directly on the impact of the Rockford area's comprehensive sports tourism product," said Nick Povalitis, vice president of marketing & sports development. "We're in constant contact with regional and national event operators, and that continues to win business for our venues and community. In addition to tourism impact, this week's events will add directly to the bottom lines of the BMO Harris Bank Center, Rock Valley College, Rockford Park District and Rockford Public Schools District 205. We're proud to support our partners through tourism marketing and are excited to continue the momentum."

Visitors will begin to arrive Tuesday and Wednesday for the NJCAA Division III Women's Basketball Championship, followed by wrestlers Thursday for the IKWF State Finals and basketball players Friday for the Illinois State Middle School Championships. An overview of this week's sports tourism portfolio includes:

2020 NJCAA Division III Women's Basketball Championship

Date & Time: Thursday-Saturday, March 12-14. Game times each day are 12 p.m., 2 p.m., 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Location: Rock Valley College Physical Education Center, 3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, IL 61114.

Tourism Impact: \$576,579 business direct sales, 750 visitors, 925 room nights, 296 jobs supported.

Notable: Rock Valley College is one of the eight teams in contention for a national championship this weekend. The Golden Eagles are seeded No. 2 and will face No. 7 Passaic County Community College at 7 p.m. Thursday. The eight-team draw features teams from seven different states. Rock Valley is in search of its fifth women's basketball national championship in program history, having last won in 2017.

Quotable: "The National Junior College Athletic Association is once again pleased to pair up with Rock Valley College and the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau for the NJCAA DIII Women's Basketball

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Championship. Over the last several years, both groups have become an important part of our Championships, and we know our athletes and coaches will have an outstanding experience in Rockford. We have championships booked through 2023 in Rockford and look forward to continuing, growing and strengthening our relationship," said Rod Lovett, NJCAA director of championships.

Championship Website: For complete event information visit https://www.njcaa.org/sports/wbkb/2019-20/div3/national_championship/index.

2020 IKWF State Finals

Date & Time: Friday-Saturday, March 13-14, Approximately 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.

Location: BMO Harris Bank Center, 300 Elm Street, Rockford, IL 61101.

Tourism Impact: \$1,233,585 business direct sales, 4,500 visitors, 2,850 room nights, 993 jobs supported.

Notable: This is the 18th-straight year that Rockford has hosted IKWF State Finals, and the Federation has extended its agreement with BMO Harris Bank Center through 2025. Moreover, RACVB and IKWF/USA Wrestling of Illinois partnered on a successful bid in the fall to host the 2020 and 2021 USA Wrestling 16U National Dual Championships—the first-ever USA Wrestling national championship to be hosted in the region.

Quotable: "The IKWF is looking forward to this weekend as we celebrate our 50th annual Illinois Kids Wrestling Federation State Championships. We are holding our State Tournament in Rockford at the BMO Harris Bank Center for the 18th-consecutive year. The BMO Harris Bank Center is a great site for us to hold our State Tournament, and we consider our relationship with the Rockford Area CVB not just a partnership, but a friendship too. We hope to remain in Rockford for many years to come," said Jim Considine, IKWF president.

Championship Website: For complete event information visit <https://www.ikwf.org/state-tournament-information/>.

2020 Illinois Middle School Basketball State Championships

Date & Time: Friday-Sunday, March 13-15. 5-10 p.m. Friday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday.

Location: UW Health Sports Factory, 305 South Madison Street, Rockford, IL 61104, **AND** Guilford High School Field House, 5620 Spring Creek Road, Rockford, IL 61114.

Tourism Impact: \$836,867 business direct sales, 5,000 visitors, 1,902 room nights, 472 jobs supported.

Notable: This is the third-straight year that Rockford has hosted the event and features grades 4-8 boys and girls club and school teams. 2020 State, which signed a two-year contract to remain in the Forest City through 2021, is expected to bring 125 total teams to the area and is one of eight Middle School State Basketball Championships in the country.

Quotable: "The third annual Illinois Middle School Basketball Championship returns to Rockford this weekend when 125 of the top middle school teams will converge for three days of competition to find the best teams in the state. The partnership with the RACVB is the model that State Basketball Championship seeks in the expansion of its events—it's a partnership that has given thousands of Illinoisans a look at the revitalization of Rockford and we're thrilled to be back for year three," said Eric Stern, 2020 State tournament director.

Championship Website: For complete event information, visit <https://www.statebasketballchampionship.com/illinois>.

The mission of the RACVB is to drive quality of life and economic growth for our citizens through tourism marketing and destination development. www.gorockford.com

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